



# ***THE SIGNAL***

May 2009

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The School Bus Motto: "A B C - Always Be Careful"

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## **New Method, New People at the Pupil Transportation Unit**

Firstly, the new method . . . like administrations everywhere, the Pupil Transportation Unit (PTU) has an obligation to practice, when possible, the principles of today's 3 R's - reduce, recycle, and reuse. To that end, welcome to PTU's first electronic distribution of *The Signal*. It goes without saying this method of delivery will reduce staff time, lessen the cost of paper and printing, and eliminate one portion of our contribution to Canada Post. Additionally, with the ease of sharing information in this electronic age, we can, with your assistance in sharing *The Signal* with staff and other colleagues, attain a broader distribution of information.

We would appreciate any feedback you may have on our new approach, and welcome your suggestions for topics in upcoming issues.

Secondly, as of April 14, 2009 there's a new sheriff in town. He's Chris Hagen, Senior Field Officer of the Pupil Transportation Unit.

Chris' introduction and thoughts begin on the next page . . .

It is with great pleasure that I introduce myself. I am Chris Hagen, formerly the Operations Supervisor for Red River Valley School Division.

I am excited to be in my new role as Senior Field Officer with the Pupil Transportation Unit. Upon arriving here I have been warmly welcomed by everyone and coached by many.

As a licensed mechanic, I joined the division 19 years ago as Head Mechanic of the Sanford Bus Garage. Although I was familiar with a bus-sized vehicle, medium duty trucks and cars comprised most of my experience. As so many of you have had happen, a training or transition period was not provided when I started, so the division afforded me the opportunity to figure things out on my own. While still performing in my mechanics role, opportunities arose where I was asked to help out in building maintenance aspects. This eventually led to my filling the position of Transportation and Maintenance Supervisor. After an amalgamation of school divisions, I continued in a similar role as Operations Supervisor.

In my time with the school division I've experienced the challenges and constraints that face school boards, administration, and support staff in providing quality education and services. In my new role, I will use this information for sound judgment and positive outcomes.

In accepting this role, my only regret was leaving the people of Red River Valley. Now I will turn my focus and attention to apply my transportation experience to better serve divisions throughout the province, rather than just one division.

I have a steep learning curve before me, but look forward to the challenge. Many of you have offered your assistance and, on

occasion, I will probably take you up on that offer.

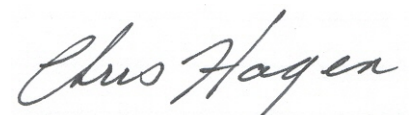
The Pupil Transportation Unit is now fully staffed, which, due to changes, has not been the case for awhile. Sandy Campbell, our Field Officer in Rivers is the longest serving staff member, has a great wealth of knowledge, and is committed to his role. Vickie Mundle has the most experience in the Winnipeg office; she is extremely proficient and serves as the resource that binds this group. Rickey Penner applies his vast expertise and knowledge to ensure that the best interests of student transportation are met. Now I have joined this team with a vested interest, a relevant background, and remain interested to see how we advance in the future.

I extend an invite to each of you to call or email me to discuss matters, voice opinions, or ask questions. In Manitoba, I think we have a dynamic group of committed people in a network focused on the safe and efficient transportation of students. Together we will move forward for everyone's betterment.

My predecessor, Chuck Beaudry has left some large shoes to fill here in the Department. I wish him all the best in his retirement and hope that we will see him on occasion.

We hope this edition of the Signal will provide you with valuable information. Please feel free to offer your feedback.

Sincerely,



Chris Hagen,  
Senior Field Officer, PTU

# THOUGHTS ON THE SCHOOL BUS CENTRAL TENDER PROCESS

The Central Tender Purchase Committee (CTPC) (comprised of representatives of MASBO, PTU staff, and with the assistance of the Provincial Procurement Branch), has just completed the process of awarding this year's tender for school bus purchasing. School divisions will now be ordering school buses according to the number of units, capacity, and selected optional equipment. These orders are sent to the PTU office, which in turn forwards them to the vendor.

The process begins with a letter sent to school divisions asking if they will be part of the central tender, or whether they will be opting out of the central tender. Currently 22 of the 35 divisions are using the central tender process. Remaining divisions will be purchasing on their own accord or not purchasing at all.

The intent of a tender is to negotiate the best possible price. Larger orders typically receive lower pricing. The role of the Committee is to secure the best deal on behalf of school divisions participating in the central tender. At the time of tender closing, the Committee is only able to deal with the information and pricing submitted at that time.

After closing of the tender, business resumes for the dealers to sell buses. Pricing may differ from the tendered pricing for a variety of reasons. Quotes that divisions receive may not include certain criteria, items, or services that the Committee has negotiated on behalf of divisions in the central tender process. As an example: after sales support for bulk purchases of software may not be included with individual quotes.

When divisions are weighing the pros and cons of which process to use for bus

purchases it helps to have a lot of information, some of which is being provided below.

For those divisions in the central tender, the larger number of units to be sold will attract the attention of local dealers as well as the support of the manufacturer or regional representatives. We have seen in many cases where optional equipment items have been added as a no-charge item on all buses ordered. In the past, dealers have gone to extraordinary lengths to ensure divisions are completely satisfied with the buses even though it could be at a significant cost to the seller.

A significant amount of work goes into tendering the purchase of buses. The Committee relieves divisions of a huge portion of this work, while Procurement ensures that critical procedures are followed. Upon tender closing, the Committee sets forth to compare the submissions, seek clarification, and follow up on some issues or items with sellers. PTU compiles documents and presentations to clearly outline the tender submissions. In this way, the Committee is best able to compare "apples to apples". After the tender is awarded, a great deal of time is spent with the successful bidder in preparation of the options list and pricing. Arrangements are made for a bus to be built early in order to allow PTU staff to perform a thorough pilot inspection at the manufacturer's plant. In many cases, errors or omissions are corrected prior to the order being filled. PTU staff are able to discuss with the manufacturer areas they would like to see improved or changed. It is at the manufacturing plant where CSA standards and Manitoba specifications are discussed with the builder. In this fashion, buses should not be arriving in Manitoba that do not meet these standards. It takes time, money, and a

lot of effort to correct deficiencies if a large number of buses have been built incorrectly. The delay in receiving the bus can be even more frustrating.

As buses arrive at the dealer, PTU thoroughly inspects them prior to delivery. In this way, the division's best interest is in the forefront. Ensuring the units meet CSA standards and Manitoba specifications is the focus of inspection. Additionally, if options are added, PTU ensures divisions get what they paid for. Items and areas that may not necessarily be noted by divisions are looked at by PTU staff. A clear and concise understanding of regulatory standards, which change from year to year, is difficult. Focus and expertise in these areas has enabled PTU staff to gain considerable proficiency in the inspection process.

During the course of the year, and for many afterwards, PTU supports divisions by acting on their behalf when there are problems with the vehicles. Dealers may have a heightened sense of attention when PTU represents a large number of divisions. In some cases, discussions may need to be held with companies other than the dealers who sell the buses.

PTU ensures that communication between divisions and the dealers happens on a regular basis. Failed material tags, feedback from mechanic seminars, evaluations, and problems experienced in the field are relayed to dealers and product suppliers.

For divisions opting out of the central tender, common reasons are: (1) they prefer one make and model of buses. This may mean fewer parts in stock, and mechanics (and drivers) can be more familiar with vehicles; (2) they may prefer to order buses at different times of the year or multiple times throughout the year; and (3) they feel delivery dates may be earlier than will those experienced through

the central tender, which are often extended. It may be easier for dealers to "slot in" smaller orders with a manufacturer (however, this has not always been the case).

The Committee uses these opinions and observations to improve the central tender process. It should be noted that delivery dates have vastly improved from past years (the entire 2008 school bus order was delivered in 20 weeks), and they may be used as a consideration factor in awarding the following year's tender. The Committee does a tender only once a year, but timelines are adjusted to best suit the majority of divisions, to meet division budgets, and to accelerate delivery. In the past, the tender may have been awarded to a number of suppliers according to the best deal on each size of bus. Divisions could have ended up with different chassis and bodies in the same year of order. Today, there are fewer possibilities of combination chassis and body. The Committee may still award the tender to one supplier for the entire order regardless of whether or not the price was the lowest on a particular size bus. In this way, divisions should have more consistency in the fleet. Regardless of which model of school bus a division prefers, there will always be changes from one year to the next in chassis, body, and options. School buses are not big Checker Cabs.

If we can clarify any of the "pros and cons" of either method, please don't hesitate to call.

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### UPCOMING EVENT!!

**2010 Canadian Pupil Transportation Conference** – scheduled for May 16-19 in Ottawa. An article on the event (taken from *Western Canadian Transportation*) can be found in Appendix A.

## 2009 SCHOOL BUS ORDER

For the second consecutive year, International has been awarded the contract to supply regular and wheelchair IC school buses to school divisions participating in the Department's central tender process. Sandy Campbell and Rick Penner travelled to Tulsa, Oklahoma May 5-7, 2009 to conduct the pilot model review and assembly line audit. It is expected that buses will begin arriving at Maxim International Trucks eight weeks from the date of order.

Twenty-two school divisions have agreed to purchase buses through the tender. Orders are currently being received by PTU.

## 2008 SCHOOL BUS ORDER

Last year's order saw a total of 62 IC units (55 regular and 7 wheelchair) purchased by 19 school divisions.

As part of the basis for awarding of the tender, International was able to honour their commitment to deliver the order within the 20 week window provided them. Inspections took place from September 5 to December 23, 2008.

## SCHOOL BUS LOG BOOK

Just a reminder that additional pages for the "binder-style" log books can be photocopied from one of the blank pages previously provided, or can be printed from the PTU website (see "Forms"; then "Log Book Inspection Report Forms").

## SCHOOL BUS MAINTENANCE SEMINAR

The 2009 School Bus Maintenance Seminar held March 31<sup>st</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup> in Winnipeg and April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in Brandon attracted 45 and 44 participants respectively.

Presenters included Blue Bird/Toromont Caterpillar; Fleetguard; Navistar International; Thomas/Freightliner; and Western Turbo & Fuel Injection Ltd.

Evaluation results from both sessions can be found in Appendix B.

## SCHOOL BUS DRIVER INSTRUCTORS' PROGRAM – TENTATIVE

PTU is considering holding the first two phases of the School Bus Driver Instructors' Program in late 2009 or early 2010, and Phase III in May or June 2010. Whether or not the program is held will depend on the number of participants registering.

If you, or anyone in your school division is interested in participating in the program, please complete the registration form found in Appendix C.

For more details on the program, refer to "Seminars and Events" on the PTU website.

## 2008 SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

Each year MASBO promotes School Bus Safety Week through a popular poster competition. The winning poster is reproduced for distribution and display in schools and communities across the Province. The theme for the past competition was *"Avoid Harm, Obey the Stop Arm"*.

On two occasions, Rick Penner of PTU represented Honourable Peter Bjornson in two Lakeshore School Division elementary schools. On March 24<sup>th</sup> at Inwood School, a local trustee, school administration, Bruce Law (Director of Transportation/Maintenance), and Rick presented a mountain bike to the winning student for the Grade 4-6 category. On April 19<sup>th</sup> at Alf Cuthbert School in Moosehorn, Bruce, Rick, and school administration shared in the presentation of a mountain bike to the winning student for the Kindergarten to Grade 3 category.

When Rick was asked how he found the events, he stated "that both opportunities were very interesting and enjoyable experiences. The kids were really excited by it."

The mountain bikes were donated by Ken Reimer of Fairway Bus Sales in Steinbach.

## PTU STAFF – "a picture is worth a thousand words"

Many of you have had verbal contact with either David Yeo, Director of Education Administration Services or members of PTU's staff from time to time, but have you ever wondered what we actually look like? Well, here's your chance - turn the page . . .

## PTU WEBSITE – a "Work in Progress"

Given that you're reading our electronic version of "The Signal", you've obviously found our website. We invite you to browse through it further and investigate the various quick reference links to relevant information and forms.

Some of our future efforts will be directed to making the site more user friendly, updating articles, and keeping the site current with issues and information from across Manitoba and other sources.

## SCHOOL BUS SAFETY BIBLIOGRAPHY

As you may or may not be aware, the Instructional Resources Unit (Library) of the Department has, over the years, compiled an extensive collection of school bus safety resources known as the "School Bus Safety Bibliography". It can be found on the PTU website under "School Bus Safety/Ridership Education" should you wish to browse through it. School divisions are welcome to borrow these resources. Instructions for ordering can be found on page 2 of the document.

The Bibliography is currently being updated by Library staff, and a number of new resources will be added. PTU will provide further information on the additions as they are added.



DAVID YEO  
**Director**  
**Education Administration Services**



CHRIS HAGEN  
**Senior Field Officer**  
**PTU - Winnipeg Office**



SANDY CAMPBELL  
**Field Officer**  
**PTU - Rivers Office**



RICK PENNER  
**Field Officer**  
**PTU - Winnipeg Office**



VICKIE MUNDLE  
**Administrative Assistant**  
**PTU - Winnipeg Office**

# The 2010 Canadian Pupil Transportation Conference: A 'Cross Country Showcase' of Student Transportation

Mark your calendar and set your budget early to be part of CPTC 2010, a bi-annual event which brings together all facets of the school bus industry!

May 16-19, 2010 will see Ottawa, Ontario hosting the 6th national Canadian Pupil Transportation Conference (CPTC). This North American event welcomes school bus operators, school board officials, federal and provincial government officials and industry manufacturers and suppliers. It provides valuable business contacts, networking and connections, powerful educational workshops, plenary sessions, and keynote speakers. Attendees will get realistic and practical "tools" that can be immediately used in the workplace, as well as an opportunity to share information and best practices in unique and innovative ways. Another highlight is the trade show with the industry's top suppliers and manufacturers.

"This event connects stakeholders in student transportation from all over North America to share information, do business and exchange the latest ideas and solutions," says Jim Talbot, Co-Chair, CPTC 2010.

There is a fantastic location – the Capital City of Canada – a myriad of attractions, fine dining and much, much more. Ottawa has something for everyone!

The "Cross Country Showcase" begins on Sunday, May 16 with local tours exploring Ottawa's finest tourist destinations and a golf tournament followed by a welcome reception.

Following the opening ceremonies on Monday, enjoy a special keynote speaker and workshop sessions, offering insight into the latest developments in the school bus industry.

Monday night offsite excursions invite guests to explore the best that Ottawa has to offer. Mix it up on Tuesday with our exciting plenary session and a trade show which provides unique opportunities to all investors! And the Gala Banquet and Entertainment on Tuesday night is a must! Wednesday, the famous Canadian commentator and host of CBC Radio's Cross Country Checkup, Rex Murphy, will be the keynote speaker for the morning offering his quick wit and professional insight. Enjoy the rest of the day in special information sharing rooms and taking an industry-related tour to a nearby facility. ●

To learn more about CPTC 2010, visit [www.cptc2010.ca](http://www.cptc2010.ca).

## School Bus Cameras

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# School Bus Maintenance Seminar Evaluation Form

*Kildonan East Collegiate, Winnipeg  
March 31 – April 1, 2009*

*This form is designed to assist you in communicating your reactions to Seminar material presented. Please rate your satisfaction with each session on a scale of 1 to 5 ("1" being least satisfied; "5" being very satisfied).*

**Evaluations Completed: 23**

Tuesday, March 31 <sup>st</sup>	Content	Information Retention	Presentation Effectiveness	Comments
<b>Turbos, Injectors, Ultra-Low Sulphur Diesel</b> Western Turbo & Fuel Injection Ltd.	4.4	4.3	4.3	See below.
<b>Various Topics</b> Blue Bird/Caterpillar	3.5	3.6	3.7	See below.
<b>Various Topics</b> Thomas/Freightliner	4.0	3.9	4.0	See below.
<b>Air, Fuel &amp; Oil Filters</b> Fleetguard	4.5	4.3	4.4	See below.
<b>Open Forums (14 respondents only)</b>	3.9	3.9	3.9	See below.

### Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>

<b>IC Bus</b> Navistar International	4.4	4.2	4.2	See below.
<b>Open Forums (12 respondents only)</b>	4.2	4.3	4.3	See below.

**Comments:**

**Turbos, Injectors, Ultra-Low Sulphur Diesel**

- Session well done/informative (3)

**Various Topics – Blue Bird/Caterpillar**

- Caterpillar not given enough presentation time (2)
- Presentation informative/generally positive (2)

**Various Topics – Thomas/Freightliner**

- Appreciated gift (LED light) (1)
- Generally positive(1)
- "Good teacher" (1)
- Pertinent information provided (1)
- Good material presented on anti-freeze (1)

**Air, Fuel & Oil Filters**

- Could have used more time on this topic/lots of information presented (2)
- Excellent presentation (1)

**IC Bus**

- Generally positive (3)
- *"Should have provided computer to be able to try the suggestions and processes that were presented. Otherwise, info was great but too dry without demonstration."* (1)
- *"Good ISIS intro. Recap on DPF. Intro for service maxx too vague."* (1)

**Open Forum – Tuesday**

- Good information discussed (1)
- Forum has been better in other years (1)

**Open Forum - Wednesday**

- Forum informative (1)
- Good IC information discussed (1)
- Forums are a good opportunity for information-sharing (1)

**General**

- Generally positive of seminar/liked meals/coffee (4)
- Someone new to the school bus repair field found the two days very educational (1)
- *"Suggest a group of non-related people spend time together discussing various assigned topics."* (1)
- *"Good job Rick & Sandy!"* (1)

# School Bus Maintenance Seminar Evaluation Form

Crocus Plains Regional Secondary School, Brandon  
April 2-3, 2009

*This form is designed to assist you in communicating your reactions to Seminar material presented. Please rate your satisfaction with each session on a scale of 1 to 5 ("1" being least satisfied; "5" being very satisfied).*

**Evaluations Completed: 24**

Thursday, April 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Content	Information Retention	Presentation Effectiveness	Comments
<b>IC Bus</b> Navistar International	4.2	4.0	4.2	See below.
<b>Open Forums</b>	4.0	4.0	4.1	See below.

Friday, April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Content	Information Retention	Presentation Effectiveness	Comments
<b>Various Topics</b> Thomas/Freightliner	4.2	4.1	4.1	See below.
<b>Air, Fuel &amp; Oil Filters</b> Fleetguard	4.1	4.0	4.1	See below.
<b>Turbos, Injectors, Ultra-Low Sulphur Diesel</b> Western Turbo & Fuel Injection Ltd.	4.1	4.2	4.3	See below.
<b>Various Topics</b> Blue Bird/Caterpillar	3.7	3.7	3.5	See below.
<b>Open Forums (14 respondents only)</b>	3.7	3.9	3.9	

**Comments:**

**Various Topics – Thomas/Freightliner**

- Generally positive comments (3)
- Good handouts (2)
- Presenter very good (1)
- Good information presented (1)

**Air, Fuel & Oil Filters**

- Generally positive comments (3)
- Great presenter (2)
- Informative information presented (2)
- "Dry at times" (1)

**Turbos, Injectors, Ultra-Low Sulphur Diesel**

- "Mike knows his stuff." / "Mike did well." / knowledgeable presenter (3)
- Generally positive comments (3)

**Various Topics – Blue Bird/Caterpillar**

- Generally positive comments (4)

**Open Forum – Tuesday**

- Generally positive comments (3)
- Good information exchange (1)

**General**

- Generally positive comments (1)
- *“Well worth the time spent. What we learn today has a bearing on what we do tomorrow.”* (1)
- *“Good job Sandy and Rickey.”* (1)

# REGISTRATION FORM FOR TENTATIVE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER INSTRUCTORS' PROGRAM

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## Possible Timeline

- Phase I and Phase II held in late 2009 or early 2010
- Phase III held in May or June 2010

## Registration

If you, or anyone from your school division, is interested in participating in the School Bus Driver Instructors' Program, please provide the information below and return the form to the PTU office.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Division/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Division Transportation Supervisor

**Please fax or email this registration form to the Pupil Transportation Unit office at:**

**Fax: 204-948-2154**

**Email: [vmundle@gov.mb.ca](mailto:vmundle@gov.mb.ca)**